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Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ERDA-05 ACDA-07 OMB-01 /092 R

DRAFTED BY PM/ISO:CCORDER;OASD/ISA/NESA:CDR ZWART:DME
APPROVED BY PM/ISO:GTCHURCHILL
PM/ISP:F.MILLER
NEA/RA:E.PADELFORD
NEA/INS:A.THIBAULT
EUR/WE:E.BIEGEL
EUR/NE:S.WORRELL
EUR/SOV:K.BROWN
EA/J:D.CHRISTENSON
----------088814 182155Z /61
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
CNO
DIA
SECDEF
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TAGS: US, IN, MOPS, OCLR

SUBJECT: NAVAL VISITS TO INDIA

REF: USDAO NEW DELHI 201314Z MAY 77 (NOTAL)

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1. SUMMARY. REFTEL REPORTED, INTER-ALIA, INDIAN NAVY INITIATIVE WHICH SUGGESTED IMPROVING NAVY-TO-NAVY RELATION-SHIPS THROUGH US NAVY SHIP VISITS TO INDIA. DEPT CONCURS IN THE DESIRABILITY OF RESUMING USN VISITS, AND IS REVIEW-ING ALTERNATIVE RESPONSES TO THE INDIAN INITIATIVE. WE SOLICIT EMBASSY VIEWS. END SUMMARY.

2. US POLICY HAS LONG BEEN TO NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY (NCND) THE PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN ANY SHIP. AS EMBASSIES ARE AWARE, THE SO-CALLED "LALL FORMULA," EMBODIED IN A 1972 INDIAN CIRCULAR NOTE, STATES QUOTE THE (GOC) TRUST THAT REQUESTS FOR HOST FACILITIES WILL NOT BE SOUGHT FOR VESSELS WHICH HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON BOARD. END QUOTE. THE US NEVER OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE "LALL NOTE." WE CONSIDER THE "LALL FORMULA" TO BE A BAR TO REQUESTS FOR USN SHIP VISITS TO INDIA, AND ARE NOT PREPARED TO CONSIDER APPROACHES AROUND IT WHICH MIGHT BE CITED OR INTERPRETED BY INDIA OR OTHER NATIONS AS US WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE OUR NCND POLICY. THOUGH VARIOUS

OPTIONS HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED WHICH WOULD NOT INVOLVE FORMAL INDIAN CANCELLATION OR REVISION OF THE "LALL FORMULA," WE ARE WARY OF HAVING OUR CRITICS SEIZE UPON FURTHER EXPLORATION OF SUCH OPTIONS AS AN INDICATION THAT WE WERE DEVIATING FROM OUR NCND POSITION. FOR MANY YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO A REACTION OF THIS

SORT FROM JAPAN. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY TOKYO'S VIEW OF THE CURRENT VALIDITY OF THIS APPREHENSION AND WHETHER THERE IS RISK OF RE-RAISING NUCLEAR ISSUES WHICH ARE PRESENTLY DORMANT BUT LIE JUST BELOW THE SURFACE IN JAPAN.

3. UK ALSO FOLLOWS AN NCND POLICY. IN 1973 HOWEVER, AFTER CONSULTING WITH US, HMG DEVELOPED A PROCEDURE AS FOLLOWS: UK REQUESTS A SHIP VISIT, BUT DOES NOT REFER TO THE "LALL NOTE." THE BRITISH DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THE GOI RESPONSE BUT THE SHIP VISIT PROCEEDS NORMALLY. BOTH PARTIES APPEAR TO BE CONTENT WITH THE RESULTING AMBIGUITY. IF ASKED THE BRITISH ARE PREPARED TO RESPOND WITH A NCND STATEMENT. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ASKED. REQUEST NEW DELHI CONSULT WITH BHC AS TO PAST INQUIRIES/ RESPONSES, IF ANY, AND TO DETERMINE IF GOI STILL REFERS TO NOVEMBER 1972 NOTE IN ITS NOTE APPROVING VISIT REQUESTS.

4. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON SOVIET PROCEDURES, FOR SHIP VISITS TO INDIA, AND WOULD APPRECIATE WHATEVER LIGHT EMBASSIES MOSCOW AND NEW DELHI MIGHT BE ABLE TO SHED ON

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THIS SUBJECT WITHOUT RPT WITHOUT INQUIRING OF THE SOVIETS
OR INDIANS. DATA ON WHETHER PRIOR UK OR SOVIET VISITS
INCLUDED NUCLEAR CAPABLE AND/OR NUCLEAR WEAPONS CARRYING
SHIPS WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL, IF AVAILABLE.

5. WE HAVE INFORMALLY DISCUSSED OUR REVIEW AND OUR
CONSIDERATIONS WITH BRITISH EMBASSY WASHINGTON. THE UK
ROYAL NAVY DESIRES TO VISIT INDIAN IN MARCH, 1978, THEIR
FIRST VISIT SINCE 1975. THEY HAVE ALSO INFORMED US THAT
THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER IN NEW DELHI REPORTED THAT
IF THE US CAUSES THE GOI TO FOCUS ON THE "LALL FORMULA"
NOW, THERE IS A "SLIGHT RISK" THAT THE UK'S DELICATE NCND
FINESSE NEXT YEAR MIGHT BE JEOPARDIZED. ACCORDINGLY, THE
BRITISH HAVE ASKED US NOT TO RAISE THE ISSUE OF THE LALL
FORMULA WITH THE INDIANS UNTIL THE GOI HAS APPROVED THE
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RN VISIT REQUEST. WE WOULD APPRECIATE NEW DELHI'S VIEWS
AS TO THE DEGREE OF JEOPARDY PERCEIVED. WE WOULD ALSO
APPRECIATE LONDON'S ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF A US DECI-
SION TO DENY THE BRITISH REQUEST FOR DELAY.

6. IN VIEW OF THE SCHEDULED CNO VISIT TO THE SUBCONTINENT
IN SEPT-OCT, WE WISH TO HAVE COMPLETED OUR GROUNDWORK BY

RESPONDING TO THE INDIAN NAVY'S INITIATIVE IN AUGUST. OUR
PRESENT INTENTION IS TO CONTINUE OUR OFFICIAL NON-RECOGNI-
TION OF THE "LALL FORMULA" BY HAVING ALUSNA NEW DELHI
RESPOND TO THE IN, SPEAKING QUOTE PRIVATELY AT HIS OWN
INITIATIVE END QUOTE. ALUSNA WOULD SAY HE AGREES THAT SHIP
VISITS WOULD CEMENT NAVY-TO-NAVY TIES, THAT HE NOTES USN
HAS NOT REQUESTED A SHIP VISIT SINCE CURRENT INDIAN POLICY
WAS PROMULGATED IN 1972, AND THAT AS LONG AS INDIAN POLICY
REMAINS IN ITS PRESENT FORM, HE IS CONVINCED THAT USN WILL
CONTINUE TO AVOID INDIAN PORTS. IF ALUSNA IS CORRECT IN
HIS PERCEPTIONS, HE WOULD CONTINUE, ALUSNA WOULD BE
INTERESTED TO KNOW WHETHER GOI INTENDS TO REISSUE ITS SHIP
VISIT DIRECTIVE, OR IN OTHER WAYS TO NULLIFY THE (APPAR-
ENTLY) OFFENDING SENTENCE. WHATEVER THE METHOD USED,
INDIANS WOULD HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO ACKNOWLEDGE AWARENESS
OF THE US POSITION ON THESE MATTERS, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD
NOT BE NECESSARY FOR THE GOI TO SPECIFICALLY ITERATE US
NCND POLICY. IF ASKED ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS ON OCCASION OF A SHIP VISIT, THE US WOULD
RESPOND, HE BELIEVES, WITH ITS STANDARD NCND STATEMENT.

7. FYI: WE ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT IT COULD OR WOULD
CAUSE A REISSUE OF THE GOI SHIP VISIT POLICY DIRECTIVE.
WE ANTICIPATE THAT IT MAY RAISE THE ISSUE AGAIN DURING
THE CNO VISIT, HOWEVER. END FYI. WE WOULD APPRECIATE

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NEW DELHI'S VIEWS ON THE APPROACH AND RESPONSE OUTLINED
ABOVE.

8. THIS IS A JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE.
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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY VISITS, NAVAL FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE196482
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: CCORDER;OASD/ISA/NESA:CDR ZWART:DME
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
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From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Office: ORIGIN PM
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1442204
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 970911
Subject: NAVAL VISITS TO INDIA
TAGS: MOPS, OCLR, IN, US, OCLR
To: MOSCOW MULTIPLE MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/397db350-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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